

Message Text

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R 191458Z APR 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 087399

EXDIS - MADRID AND ROME FOR AMBASSADORS; PARIS FOR CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SP, FR, IT

SUBJECT: CONTACTS WITH LOCAL COMMUNISTS

1. PRESENT GUIDELINES AUTHORIZE EMBASSY CONTACTS AT WORK-
ING LEVEL IN PARIS AND ROME WITH LOCAL COMMUNIST PARTY
REPRESENTATIVES AND SUCH SOCIAL AND WORKING CONTACTS BY
CONSULAR OFFICERS AS ARE STRICTLY NECESSARY. WITH CON-
TINUED EXPANSION OF THE ROLES OF THE FRENCH AND ITALIAN
PARTIES AND WITH LEGALIZATION OF THE SPANISH
COMMUNIST PARTY, THERE HAS ARISEN A CLEAR NEED FOR UPDATED
INSTRUCTIONS THAT WILL MAKE OUR POLICIES CONSISTENT IN ALL
THREE COUNTRIES AND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE VIEWS OF THE NEW
ADMINISTRATION.

2. OUR GENERAL APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM WAS PUT ON THE
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RECORD BY DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN ON APRIL 6 (STATE 78012)
YOU SHOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO INTERPRET STATEMENT OR COMMENT
ON ANY PARTICULAR PHRASING. CERTAIN PASSAGES ARE INTEN-
TIONALLY VAGUE IN ORDER TO AVOID TYING US TO FUTURE DEVELOP-
MENTS THAT CANNOT BE PREDICTED.

3. ANY EXPANSION OF CONTACTS WITH THE COMMUNIST PARTIES OF

WESTERN EUROPE WILL HAVE IMPORTANT NEGATIVE ASPECTS:
PUBLICIZED MEETINGS WITH AMERICAN OFFICIALS CONVEY AN AP-

PEARANCE OF ACCEPTABILITY, WHILE WE GAIN LITTLE. SUCH AP-
PEARANCES CAN IN TURN DAMAGE FRIENDLY AND DEMOCRATIC
GOVERNMENTS OR PARTIES NOW IN OFFICE WITH SMALL MARGINS.
ON THE OTHER HAND, THE FRENCH AND ITALIAN PARTIES ALREADY
CONTROL MANY LOCAL ENTITIES AND MAY SOON ACHIEVE A DEGREE
OF INSTITUTIONALIZED POWER AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL. THUS,
TO THE ARGUMENTS FAVORING MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO INFLUENCE
THE PARTIES OR LEARN MORE ABOUT THEM IS ADDED THE PURELY
PRAGMATIC ONE OF IMPROVING OUR ACCESS TO THEM AT A TIME
WHEN WE CAN STILL SET THE TERMS.

4. ACCORDINGLY, UNDER THE PERSONAL DIRECTION AND CAREFUL
CONTROL OF EACH CHIEF OF MISSION THERE MAY NOW (IN SPAIN
FOLLOWING THE ELECTIONS) TAKE PLACE SUCH CONTACTS WITH
COMMUNIST PARTY OFFICIALS BELOW THE LEVEL OF PARTY SECRE-
TARY, WHETHER OR NOT HOLDING ELECTED OFFICE, AS THE CHIEF
OF MISSION FINDS NECESSARY TO THE CONDUCT OF GOVERNMENT
BUSINESS. THESE CONTACTS SHOULD AVOID HASTY INITIATIVES,
SHOULD TAKE CAREFUL ACCOUNT OF THE NEGATIVE FACTORS LISTED
ABOVE AND SHOULD BE CONDUCTED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO HAVE
THE LEAST POLITICAL IMPACT IN EACH COUNTRY. WE DO NOT WANT
TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE THREE PARTIES HAVE FOUND
SUDDEN FAVOR IN AMERICAN EYES OR THAT WE TAKE THEIR ACCE-
SSION TO POWER FOR GRANTED.

AMBASSADORS AND DCM'S SHOULD NOT CALL ON OR PARTICIPATE
IN ARRANGED MEETINGS WITH PROMINENT COMMUNISTS HOLDING
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ONLY PARTY POSITIONS. THIS RECOGNIZES THAT SOCIAL CONTACT
MAY BE UNAVOIDABLE AND THAT CALLS ON ELECTED OFFICIALS
MAY BE NECESSARY OR DESIRABLE.
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